

Could It Be Food Sensitivities?

By Staci Small MA, RD; Registered Dietitian and Owner of The Wellness Philosophy, Inc.

Constipation, reflux, irritable stools, headaches, sleep disturbances and intermittent eczema—often these are common complaints and symptoms observed in my practice, especially from those on the autism spectrum.

Many of my patients experiencing these issues have consulted with their primary care physician or various specialists only to be left with no clear explanation or solution to their symptoms. These symptoms are often magnified in individuals with autism as they have been shown to have additional chronic gastro-intestinal issues more frequently than their typical peers.

Children with autism have also been shown to have significantly higher levels of the IgG antibody to wheat protein and many other foods compared with unrelated healthy controls. An IgG food sensitivity test is often a useful tool in helping to devise a plan to potentially help those suffering with these uncomfortable issues.

Because a food sensitivity is different than a true food allergy, in many cases those displaying symptoms may not even be aware that food is the culprit. A food allergy involves the body's immune response and can cause a host of often immediate reactions. Food allergies can be life threatening in the most severe cases. The body's

reaction to a food sensitivity is usually less severe and can cause a range of reactions from behavior and hyperactivity problems in children to headaches and numerous digestive issues in people of all ages. Often, reactions from a food sensitivity may not be realized until several hours to several days after consuming a "problem" food. These delayed reactions make it very difficult to detect without laboratory testing.

Among the most common foods and ingredients causing sensitivities and allergic reactions in both children and adults include dairy products (casein), wheat (gluten) and other grains, eggs, nuts, soy, seafood, preservatives, artificial colors, artificial flavors, and food additives.

Common symptoms of food sensitivities include, but are not limited to, upset stomach, reflux, diarrhea or constipation, behavioral issues, irritability, hyperactivity, aggression, runny nose, eczema or skin rashes, headache, bloating, or difficulty sleeping. Understanding how food sensitivities develop is key to the



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References:

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treatment and future well-being of each individual. For IgG testing options, families are encouraged to consult with a Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs (MAPS) practitioner or integrative health provider.